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LB 273, 274

atrocious crime. But I hope when he, she, or they are caught, whoever the judge is will give the maximum sentence, in terms of locking up and fining, to show that this is not allowed. There was speculation that the dog, because of some of the injuries, may have been trained to fight. She could have lost a fight. The owner could have felt it was a negative reflection on him, and took it all out on her. So this language would require the reporting by these different caseworkers of animal abuse that they see. It does not require them to investigate or go out and ferret it out. If they're in the course of their work and they see something of this nature, then they report it. There was no objection by anybody to that. The second part deals directly with the animal cruelty itself. The penalty for that is a Class I misdemeanor. Senator Hartnett's bill was simply going to make all animal cruelty offenses a Class IV felony. But those who work in this area pointed out that not all of them rise to that level. And if it was felt by a prosecutor that the conduct did not rise to the level of a felony, nothing would be done to that person. So we left the Class I misdemeanor for those types of actions that were not as brutal and vicious as the kind we're aiming at. But anybody who committed one of those offenses that was a Class I misdemeanor, if they did it again, it's a Class IV felony. The first offense, which involves torture, brutality, or beating, is a Class IV felony. So now, to wrap that up, what this amendment would do is to strip out all of the existing contents from LB 273, and we would insert in their place what I have just discussed. The contents of LB 273 will not be lost. They will then be merged with LB 274, which is following it. So if you have any questions about the merits of the amendment itself or the process being employed, I'm prepared to answer those questions. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Further discussion? Seeing none, the Chair would recognize Senator Chambers to close. He waives closing. The question is the adoption of AM0649 to LB 273. All those in favor please vote aye; those opposed vote nay. Please record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the adoption of Senator Chambers' amendment.